

[illegible]

19th April 1961, the following Bill was signed by the Bill Committee, were as follows:

*Articles Exhibited against William Clewer, Minister of
Alston in the County of Northampton.*

Fileth that the said *Clare* has *very* *Calicious* *Mind* and doth endeavour unjustly
to exact and extort Sums of Money and other things from the said *Parishians*
and others that he hath to doe with: It is *releazd* from the said *Parishians*

7. The *late Slave* had unjustly demand a Cow for a Herriot, of *Saml. Jones* a Poor Widow, whose Husband was lately Dead, and Died so Poor that he was not able to bury him at his Charge, he leaving his Aild Wife with five Children, and nothing to maintain them but that one Cow, and it was never known that any Herriot was there paid.

And the better to procure his End therein, the said *Clewer* Promised her, that if she would let him have the Cow, he would procure her a *Warrant* from the Justice of the Peace, that the *Deaf* should pay her weekly one Shilling for the maintenance of herself and Children.

of Laureates from whom we had painfully and faithfully done their Duties.

and a poor Widow (whose Husband was there lately Dead, and the her self
 being then very Sick and Weak and almost blind, and left in Debt fifty pounds at least,

having four small Children unable to maintain themselves) to pay him the tenth penny for a Calf which she sold towards the Payment of her Husbands Debts; and enforced her to pay two pence for the Head and Pluck which she had reserved for her self.

The said *Clewer* hath pulled down a great part of the Parsonage House, and converted the Materials thereof to his own use.

The said *Clewer* notwithstanding his Parsonage at *Ashton* is Worth one Hundred and Twenty Pounds by the Year at least yet for lucre of Money did undertake to serve another Cure of Twenty Pounds by the Year, by means whereof he served neither of them as he ought to do.

The said *Clewer* is a very Contentious Man, and doth much vex and trouble, and disorder his Neighbours, Parishioners and others, by unjust Suits and Malicious troubles. For,

The said *Clewer* did in a clandestine way, procure a Bond which was made to a Serjeant at Arms for security, and sued one *Budworth*, who was Sheriff Berden, upon the same, and recovered Fifty Pounds of him, and caused him to spend Fifty Pounds more at least, notwithstanding the Serjeant at Arms was never Damned one penny thereby.

The said *Clewer* hath at the last Assizes in the County of Northampton indicted a Gentlewoman of his Parish of good Parentage, and of Worth and Quality, for Felony, for Stealing of his Horse; and himself, and his Wife, and Maid gave evidence thereupon, and would have brought the Gentlewomans Life in question if he possibly could have done it: and when the Grand Jury had returned the Bill *Ignoramus*, he gave out in Speeches, that he had sufficiently disparaged the Gentlewoman by what he had done.

That he hath commenced Suits against divers of his Parishioners, who were willing to pay him his just dues, because they would not pay what he would unjustly have exacted and extorted from them.

He hath refused to pay just Debts owing by him, and hath declared, he would rather spend one hundred Pounds in Law, than pay five Pounds when he is sued for it, though it were due.

The said *Clewer* is very weak unable and insufficient for the Ministerial Function, and idle, and will not take pains therein as he ought to do, nor perform what of Duty he ought: For

He doth ordinarily Preach other Mens Works, *Verbatim*, that are in Print, which the Parishioners have in their Houses, and can read at Home.

He hath several times in his Sermons uttered and spoke nonsense.

He hath neglected his Cure upon several Lords Dayes, to prosecute contentious Suits and Quarrels, and for his own ease, and procured none to supply the same.

Refused to Baptize the Child of a Visible Believer, being tendered and the Father present.

Refused to Baptize the Child of a Souldier that was in Service, because the Father was not present, and the Child died within few daies.

The said Clewer is scandalous in his Life and Conversation: For,

First, He is a Liar, and a common speaker of Untruths.

Secondly, He did Privately keep in his House one Mistress Bernard, Widow, fix or seven Weeks together, and denied that she was there: and afterwards kept her publicly, having no relation to her, and now keepeth her as his Wife, but whether they were ever Married according to the Laws, is not known.

That he the said *Clewer* hath been Drunk, and abused himself with excess.

The Kings Majesty being restored, the Sequestred incumbent Doctor *Whisford* entred upon the said Living, and Doctor *Clewer* being thereupon to seek for a benefice came to London, and then pretended himself to be a zealous Son of the Church (though for ten years before he had posselt the Sequestred Living, and Violently Prosecuted his Reader, for Reading Common-Prayer as aforesaid) and not being well known about London, hearing that the Vicarage of Croydon was Void, made

Friends

Friends to the Earl of *Clarendon* then Lord *Chancellor* of *England*, to obtain the same, which he effected by the help of a Gentleman, (to whom he promised a good Reward for his pains to be paid him so soon as the Presentation should be sealed) which Gentleman having obtained the Presentation, the Doctor got it from him, but never paid him to this day, as the Gentleman reported.

That having got this Presentation to *Croydon*, he hastened thither: the Vicarage consists only of small Tythes, which at the utmost Value, is not worth above Eighty Pounds; this for some time was paid the Dr. *per annum*, who when he had been a little in the Parish and had got all the Parishioners Names into his Book, fell to his old Practices of Oppression and Extortion, bringing frequently Vexatious Suits against all or most of the Parishioners (because they would not comply with his unreasonable and extravagant demands. Under these Horrid Oppressions the Parishioners having many years suffered, and some hundreds of the Inhabitants ruined thereby, they joined together, and caused the said Doctor to be indicted for a Common Barrator, was to have come to a Trial in *Hilary Term* 1673, at the *Kings Bench Bar*: accordingly the Jury was summoned, and the Informers ready to have made good the Indictment by above three hundred Witnesses: but about two daies before the said Trial should have been, a *Noli Prosequi* was entered, by means whereof the Trial was stopt.

This *Noli Prosequi* was obtained by fraud also, for *Clewer* finding that the Parish were resolved for to prosecute, came to one Mr. *Bickerton*, who was then one of Mr. *Burton Turner's* Clerks, tells him thereof, adding that he was like to be undone thereby, for that the Rogues (as he called them) would swear him to be a Common Barrator: then asked him whether he believed there could be such Rogues in *England*? To which the said *Bickerton* replied, that he alwaies suspected that a mischief would come upon him, for his continued Vexations continued to his Poor Parishioners; and wondered they had not done it sooner; adding, that he believed they had just cause to proceed against him, by what he understood of his wayes in proceeding against them in the Exchequer. Whereupon *Clewer* asked if there were no way to stop the Trial for that Time? beg'd his assistance if possible to do the same, promising to give him ten pounds for his pains if he succeeded therein: Upon which Mr. *Bickerton* advised him to get a *Noli Prosequi*, for which purpose a Petition was drawn, setting forth that the Parishioners were Litigious, factious People, would pay him no Tythes, but forced him by means thereof to sue for his dues, and now had indicted him for a Common Barrator, merely for bringing such his lawful Suits against them; therefore prayed Proceedings might be stopt. This done, the said Doctor gave *Bickerton* a note under his hand to pay him ten Pounds if the Suit were stopt that Term, and away he went with the Petition to a Person that presented it to his Majesty, (who, being misinformed, and thinking that the said Doctor might have just occasion to sue as by Petition he pretended) did order Mr. Attorney General to enter a *Noli Prosequi*; and accordingly a *Noli prosequi* reciting his Majesties Command was granted, and the Suit stopt, which done the said Doctor went back to *Bickerton*, and crying, told him his Majesty denied the Petition, and that the Trial was not stopt, desired therefore his Note again that he had given him for his ten Pounds, which Mr. *Bickerton* delivered, as thinking *Clewer* had spoken truth, and so cheated him of his ten Pounds promised him upon accmpt as aforesaid,

The poor Parishioners of *Croydon*, they were greatly troubled not knowing what to do, being stopt from proceedings at Law, thereupon went to Counsel, and were advised to have Petitioned the Parliament then sitting, as lying under a Grievance, and being denied the benefit of the Law for their redress, but upon Application made to the Lord Keeper and Mr. Attorney General that now are, and acquainting them with the Truth of the Case, they did assure the Parishioners, that his Majesty was surprized with the granting of his *Noli Prosequi*, and undoubtedly would take the same off, if addressed unto in Council.

Whereupon the 21 of *March* 1672, a Petition was exhibited to his Majesty, praying that the *Noli Prosequi* might be taken off, and the Parishioners left to the Law; or that he would graciously be pleased to hear the Cause, and relieve them according to Justice.

To which Petition was annexed the Articles following.

Articles of high Misdemeanor humbly exhibited to the Kings most Excellent Majesty, and the Right Honourable the Lords of his most Honourable Privy Council, by the Inhabitants of the Town of Croydon in the County of Surrey, against Doctor William Clewer, Vicar of that Town.

That the said Doctor by unjust Vexations and numerous Suits by him frequently brought against his Parishioners; extorts more from them than what either his Predecessors claimed, or had, or is his due.

2. He frequently after he hath been punctually paid his full dues, arrests his poor Parishioners, and forces them to pay the same over again, together with great sums for charges, which he pretends he hath been at, declaring he will have of them what he pleases, for he cannot live on his Dues.

3. He hath served several of the poor People with pretended Processes, and compels them to pay him money when there is nothing due to him from them, and extorts money for the Process, whereas there was never any Process pursued other than what was made by himself, which is to the great abuse of his Majesties Courts at Westminster.

4. That he doth very often sue out many Writs out of the Exchequer against several of the Parishioners that owe him not a farthing, puts them to vexation, trouble and charge, and then never exhibits any Bill against them.

5. That because one of his Parish would not Swear for him what he would have had him, he vowed he would sue him as long as he lived, and so hath continued to do ever since, to his almost utter ruine.

6. That he frequently arrests poor People for Tithes, puts them to great charges when-as they owe him nothing; and such as are able to make opposition he never declares against, but forces the rest to compound and give him what he pleaseth.

7. That he hath Attached the Goods of several persons for Tithes pretended to be due to him, whereas none was due from them, hereby put the People to charge, done damage to their Goods; and when Replevins have been brought, then he hath never appeared or declared.

8. That he hath imprisoned several Persons, and detained their Goods in his house till he hath forced them to give him what money they have, and seal Bonds to him for other sums of money by him demanded, when there hath not been one penny due to him.

9. That having come to an agreement with several persons for their Tithes to take such a sum for them yearly, he hath received the sum of money agreed upon for several years together, and afterwards denied the same, and sued the persons for their Tythes in kind, and the arrears thereof; and some of the People with whom he agreed, being illiterate, trusted him to write the agreement, he set down double the sum that was agreed upon, got their mark to his Book, and sued the Persons, and forced them to pay the same, together with such unreasonable charge as he demanded of them.

10. He hath Cited several of his Parishioners into the Spiritual Courts for pretended Crimes, because he could not have his unjust demands of them, and when he hath so cited them, hath taken summes of money of them to excuse them being prosecuted in the said Court.

11. That having let a Lease of his Tithes to one Mr. Wood for a certain Rent, Wood by vertue of that Lease received Tithes of the Parishioners, and paid him his Rent, after which he sued the Parishioners over again for the same Tithes, and forced them for quietness to pay him, declaring the only way to be quiet was to pay both Wood and Him.

12. Several poor People having in the time of the late dreadful Sickness buried their relations in the Woods, the said Doctor in the time of their necessity was so far from extending his Charity towards their relief, that he forced them to pay unreasonable Fees for their Burials, as if they had been buried by him in the Church-yard; those that would not comply with him, he sued and extorted great summes of money from them for his Charges as well as Duties, before he would clear his Prosecution.

13. He denied to receive his Tithes in kind of several of his Parishioners, though duly tendered to him, and he desired to accept of them; demands of them what moneys he pleases in lieu thereof; And if they do not pay what he demands, he sues them at Law; and if they agree and pay for one, two, three, four, five, or six years at the rate compounded for, then at the six years end he demands of them the arrears of Tithes, pretending the Tithes to be of greater yearly value then what he compounded for: and if the People will not pay what he demands above his composition-money paid for these years past, then he sues them till they by frights, and being put to unreasonable trouble and charge, were enforced to give him what he demanded rather then be undone by contending with him; that being the lesser evil of the too, by him put to their choice.

14. Here by this violent Persecution of diverse poor men, hath forced them to leave their Wives and Children, and seek shelter in remote places, to the utter ruine of their Families.

15. He demands of the poor Inhabitants the tenth Penny got by their day labour, and threatnes to compel them to bring their Milk into the Church-Porch to sell, and there deliver him his tenth: from some he hath extorted great sums of money, on pretence that he had been at Law with them seven years, whereas they were never served with any Process; others he hath served with Process after they had newly paid him his demands, to put them to further vexation and charge. One Process which he had taken out against a man, he altered it, and made another man pay the charges as if it had been originally made out against him.

16. He frequently extorts great Sums of Money from his Parishioners for Marrying out of the Parish; and those that refuse to pay him what he demands for that Offence, he refuses to receive their Tythes, and then sues them for their Tythes and that together.

17. Such persons as refuse to pay the said Doctor his unjust Demands, he will not suffer the Clerk to receive his just Dues, threatening to sue both for his Money and Clerk's Dues, when as both hath been tendred, and might have been received without any Suit.

18. He hath arrested several on pretended great Actions, and thereby kept them in Prison, and yet on the Tryal could prove nothing against them; to the utter ruine of these poor People imprisoned; and hath forced several persons to pay him five pounds, where his due is but twelve pence.

By these and the like Extortions he makes his Living above 250 *l. per annum*, which never was worth to any his Predecessors above 60 *l.* and enricheth himself by the ruines of his Parishioners, especially the poorer sort that live on the Common, whom he endeavours to enslave because they are not able to contend with him at Law.

That Petition and Articles were read.

The Kings most excellent Majesty, his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and eighteen more of his Majesties most Honourable Privy-Council were present, and the Order following was made.

B

At

At the Court at *Whitehall*, the 21 *March*, 1672.

Present

The King's most Excellent Majesty.

His Royal Highness the Duke of *Tork*.

Lord Chancellor.

Lord Treasurer.

Duke of *Lauderdale*.

Duke of *Ormond*.

Earl of *Bridgewater*.

Earl of *Northampton*.

Earl of *Anglesey*.

Earl of *Carlisle*.

Earl of *Arlington*.

Earl of *Bathe*.

Earl of *Craven*.

Lord Viscount *Falconbridge*.

Lord *Newport*.

Lord *Berkley*.

Mr. Secretary *Conventry*.

Mr. Chancellor of the Dutchy.

Master of the Ordnance.

Sir *Thomas Osborne*.

THE Inhabitants of the Town of *Croydon* in the County of *Surrey*, by their Petition this day read at the Board, humbly complaining of the many Oppressions, Extortions, violent and unwarrantable Proceedings of Dr. *William Clewer*, Vicar of the said Parish of *Croydon*, against the Petitioners, under pretence of recovering his Tythes, insomuch that in a short time (if Relief be not given) most of the Petitioners will be forced to leave their Dwellings, or be inevitably ruined, as some of them with their Families have already been; It was thereupon Ordered by his Majesty in Council That the Petitioners do forthwith deliver in to the Clerk of the Council attending the Particulars wherewith they intend to charge the said Dr. *Clewer*, to the end he may have a Copy thereof timely enough to come prepared to make his Defence thereunto on Friday the 4th of *April* next: which time his Majesty hath appointed to hear the said Complaints, and doth command that all Parties concern'd do then give their attendance.

John Nicholas.

According to this Order, a short Paper was delivered in to the Clerk of the Council, whereby the Parishioners declared they would insist upon,

Oppression, Extortion, common Barrety, Subornation of Perjury, Forgery, Felony, and some more such like petty Crimes of his Doctorship.

But before the Cause came to be heard, the Act of Grace came out; and Barrety, a thing never pardoned by any former Act of Grace, was pardoned thereby.

The fourth of *April* 1673. his Majesty was graciously pleased to come early to the Council, and together with his Royal Highness, and twenty more of the Lords of the Privy Council late, with unspeakable Patience heard the Charge against the said Doctor made good, which was done by the Oaths of several persons in every particular mentioned in the said Articles, and many others (if possible more wicked and hainous than the former) was proved against him.

1. As first, he being one of the Trustees for the Alms-houses in *Croydon*, would not suffer Almes-men to be admitted till he had forced them to promise to allow him one half of the profits of the said Alms-houses, and took Bond for the same; which done, he admitted them; and would have turned one *Edward Humfry* out of his Alms-house when he could no longer afford to pay him four shillings a month according to the said Bond, which *Humfry* is now turned out by the said Doctor.

2. That

(9)
2. That when at the Sacrament money hath been collected for the Poor, he took a third part of it to his own use, saying, None was poorer than the Vicar, and kept it; which hath since prevented mens Charity.

3. That he sent for a man from London pretending he would pay him some money which he owed his Father who was dead; the poor man came to Croydon to his house, and was made welcome, and had good meat and drink; after which he was carried by the Doctor into the Garden, made eat Fruits, which done he sent him away without a penny of money: but that was not all, for soon after he arrested the poor man in an Action of Trespass of two or three hundred pounds, damage for coming into his ground, kept him a Prisoner till he was forced to seal him a general Release, and so cheated him of his Debt, which was about thirty pound, and grew due to his Father Mr. Preston as aforesaid, for officiating as Curate for him at Ashton in Northamptonshire.

4. They proved that the Doctor had two special Bayliffs that do all his business, one of them hath been burnt in the hand, the other a vile Rogue as is in the Country; these Arrest his Parishioners, then bringing them to his house, there they are kept Prisoners till he force them to agree to what he pleaseth; which done, he draws them into Judgments instead of pretended Notes: and these are they whom he useth, together with a most excellent Gentlewoman Mrs. Reams's Daughter in law, who went there by the name of Mrs. Clewer, who by the report of the whole Country and People at Westminster, had a Child before her Marriage, lay in at Westminster, and the Doctor was much with her, and she went for his Wife, though her Mother was then alive; now lives in the Doctors house, wholly governs him, to say no worse, makes him oppress the People as she pleaseth, and is his constant Witness to all his Agreements.

5. They proved that when the Doctor hath gone into the Pulpit to Preach, he hath doopt bundles of Writs out of his Pockets taken out against his Parishioners; and being taken up and perused, have been found to be raz'd in the Dates and in the Names, and new Dates and new Names put into them: which was a frequent thing with him, he making twenty Warrants out against twenty Persons upon one single Writ, and making each person pay seven shillings six pence for charges, when the Writ cost him not above three shillings; so that he got above seven pound by a Writ, and made a property of his Majesties Court of Exchequer, to the enriching himself and impoverishing his Parishioners. And after, when he should have been Preaching on Sundayes, did use to ride to London to follow Suits against his Parishioners, leaving them without any one to Preach or read Prayers for them.

6. That he sent for the Parishioners to come to his house to pay their Tithes, and when they had so done, frequently Arrested some of them in Actions of Trespass for coming upon his ground, thereby putting them to great charge, and ruined some of them.

7. That he hired a Carrier to bring his goods to London, which was done, and in London an old Desk was stole out of the Carriers Warehouse, by his letting his goods lie there three weeks after brought up; but the man that stole it was caught, the Desk brought back to the Inn, was opened, not knowing whose it was, and there was only in it a pair of Slippers and one old Law Book. The Doctor arrests the Carrier, declares against him for 190 l. pretended to be in the said Desk. The Carrier telling his Landlord thereof, he produced the said Desk with the things aforesaid in it; so that Suit ceased.

8. He hath caused the Gentry to leave the Town, so the Ruine thereof, spoiled the School, so that no Gentlemens Sons come at it. He hath caused Lands and Houses to fall in their Rents, brought down the Price of them in their Sale above three years Purchase; makes Tenants that they will take no Lease, unless Landlords will Covenant to secure them against him; which they dare not do, and so the Houses and Lands stand empty and lie waste. And he hath forced the Parishioners to leave their Parish Church, and to keep from receiving the Sacrament, insomuch that there are not above ten or twelve in the Parish besides Almshouse people (who are obliged) that will come to the Church or Sacrament; but if a stranger at any time do Preach, there comes at least six, seven, or eight hundred.

Lastly, That the said Doctor endeavour'd to part Husbands from their Wives, raising false Stories of them; offered himself to sue out Divorces.

And many more Crimes of this nature.

These matters, and also the aforesaid Articles, being clearly proved, the said Doctor only for defence offered, that the Parishioners would pay him no Tithes; thereupon was forced to Sue them for his Dues, and pray'd time to make defence.

Whereupon the Order following was made.

At Whitehall the fourth of April 1673.

Present,

The King's most Excellent Majesty.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York.

His Highness Prince Rupert.

Lord Chancellor.

Lord Treasurer.

Duke of Lauderdale.

Duke of Ormond.

Marquess of Worcester.

Earl of Ogle.

Earl of Ossery.

Lord Great-Chamberlain.

Earl of Bridgewater.

Earl of Northampton.

Earl of Anglesey.

Earl of Carlisle.

Earl of Craven.

Earl of Arlington.

Earl of Caibury.

Viscount Hallifax.

Mr. Secretary Coventry.

Mr. Chancellor of the Dutchy.

Master of the Ordnance.

HIS Majesty having this day heard at large the complaints of the Inhabitants of the Parish of *Croydon* in *Surrey*, against Doctor *Clewer*, Vicar of that Place, concerning several exorbitant Courses by him practised for recovery of his Tithes, was pleased to refer the whole matter to his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, and to the Earle of *Shaftsbury* Lord High Chancellor of *England*; who requiring the said Doctor, and some of the principal persons of the said Parish, to attend them, are to endeavour to settle the business for the future quiet of the Parishioners, and that there may be a constant maintenance for the Vicar there: which if their Lordships shall not be able to effect, they are to return their Opinion and Advice to his Majesty what they conceive fit to be done therein.

John Nicholas.

With this Order his Gracethe Lord Arch Bishop of *Canterbury*, and the Right Honourable the Lord High Chancellor of *England* being attended, they were pleased to appoint a day in *May* last past, when both parties, with their Witnesses, should attend their Lordships at *Lambeth-House*, where the matters aforesaid were made manifest. As also,

That the said Doctor *Clewer* was a notorious and common Thief, that used to come into Bookfellers Shops and steal Books and carry them away, several Masters of Shops gave Testimony thereof. To which the Doctor being to give answer, declared that true it was, that he was sitting in a Shop, reading a Book, and saw a Gentleman come by that he had occasion to speak with, and in haste ran after him and forgot to lay down the Book and carried it with him; but the man presently followed him and took it of him. But alas, good Gentleman! he had often had this chance of following his Friends with other mens Books under his Cloak. If he had done so but once, it might have passed as forgetfulness: But it fell out very unluckily, that at Mr. *Sawbridge* his Shop at the Bible on *Ludgate-Hill*, he came in and took away a Book of good value, carried it beyond Fleet-Bridge, and there was overtaken, and brought back, and beg'd Pardon, declaring who he was. Mr. *Sawbridge* thereupon, loth to bring any scandal upon a man of his Coat, went with him into Fetter-Lane to a Gentlemans House to inquire of him, and finding that he was Doctor *Clewer*, and Vicar of *Croydon*, resolved to make no more noise of it, if he would ingenuously con-

confess what Books he had formerly stolen from him; for that he had often been at his Shop, and he had often lost Books, but never knew who to charge with them. Thereupon he promised he would go home, look over all his Books, and bring him the names of them, as also money for them; that he never came there again, or sent the Catalogue of the Books he had stolen, but he did send his Wife to the Shop with about thirty nine shillings, and she paid the same for the Books he had stolen: so that it was not alwayes forgetfulness, or running after Friends that made him carry Books out of the Shops.

The said Doctor being then asked, why after so many Arrests, and so many suits against his Parishioners, he never brought any one of them to Trial whereby the *modus decimandi* might have been settled? It was proved against him, that being demanded the same question in the Exchequer, he declared most falsely and scandalously of his Grace of *Canterbury*, that his Grace had directed him not to do it, because the then Lord Chief Baron, (now Lord-Chief-Justice *Hales*) was an Enemy to the Church of *England*.

Upon the whole matter, his Grace and the Lord Chancellor proposed to the Parish to settle a certain Maintenance upon their Vicar for the future, that so no more suits might arise. To which the Parishioners most willingly assented, provided the Doctor might be removed and have no benefit thereof; and proposed, as poor as he had made them, yet to be rid of him, and to have a good Learned Orthodox and Peaceable Man settled amongst them, they would make a certain allowance of an hundred and twenty Pounds *per annum*, to be paid to the succeeding Vicar by quarterly Payments without charge and trouble.

No sooner was this Proposal made, but Doctor *Clewer*, who the World knows is a Notorious Lyar, (and the old Proverb is, *A Liar had need to have a good memory*) starts up; and although just before he had told their Lordships he was forced to bring his Actions, and to have multiplicity of Suits because his Parishioners would pay him nothing, that although he had offered them his Vicarage at 60, 50, nay 30 *l. per annum*, they refused to take the same; he told them that 120 *l.* was nothing, for that the Parish had offered him 180 *l.* themselves.

Note, The Doctor let the Tithes for three years to one *Wood* at 60 *l. per annum*, and the said *Wood* received the Tithes of the Tennants, paid him his Rents, and afterwards the Doctor sued the Parishioners, and made many of them, to their utter Ruin, pay him the said Tithes over again, though they had *Woods* discharge for the same.

Nevertheless to be rid of the Doctor the Parish then proposed to allow an hundred and sixty pound *per annum* to the surviving Vicar.

The conclusion of this meeting was that the Parishioners should draw up their Proposals in Writing, put them under their hands, and present them to the Lord High Chancellor of *England*: accordingly they were drawn up and signed by above three hundred Persons, and presented to his Lordship, and a Copy to his Grace of *Canterbury*; and one other Copy annexed to a Petition was presented to his Majesty in Council, the Purport whereof was as follows.

1. That provided Doctor *Clewer* were presently removed, the Parish would allow the succeeding Vicar successively, if a Sober, Learned, Orthodox and Peaceable Man, an hundred and sixty pounds *per annum*.

2. That Doctor *Clewer* should have no advantage of the said offer.

3. That they would consent to an Act of Parliament or Decree in *Chancery* or *Exchequer* to settle and confirm the same.

4. That till such Act or Decree could be passed, to the intent the said Doctor might not be continued, twenty of the most able Parishioners would become bound to the surviving Vicar to pay him an hundred and sixty pound in lieu of all his Tithes or other Dues, until the said one hundred sixty pound should be confirmed by Act of Parliament, or Decree aforesaid.

5. That whereas the said Doctor pretended great arrears of Tithes and Dues owing to him, and many Actions were brought by him against the Parishioners for the same, every Person concerned therein would be determined by the Judgment of any two indifferent Persons, as the said Lord's Grace of *Canterbury* and late Lord Chancellor should appoint to hear and determine the same without further charges and trouble in Law.

This seemed very reasonable and satisfactory to his Grace and the Lord Chancellor, and thereupon Doctor *Glover* being sent for by the late Lord Chancellor, was told thereof, and advised to surrender to his Grace of *Canterbury*, which if he would do, was offered another Living of 120 *l.* per annum in *Northamptonshire*, then in the Lord Chancellor's gift; and his Grace of *Canterbury* should present one other able Orthodox Man to *Croydon*, to be named by the then Lord Chancellor, (his Grace of *Canterbury* being so convinced of the badness of Doctor *Glover*, as he resolved never to present him to any other.)

This being the Medium most graciously proposed by His Majesty in Council, for the ease of his Poor Subjects,

This offer the Doctor promised to accept, and to go to the Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury* and resign accordingly; but as he ever hath been false, so in this he manifested it in breaking his word both with his Grace and the Lord Chancellor, so that they could do nothing.

And truly till it was considered what the reason might be, it was wondered that he that might have had a Living of 120 *l.* per annum certain, to part with about 20 or 30 *l.* per annum gotten with contention, should not accept the same: but afterwards it appeared plainly that he was so well known in *Northamptonshire*, that the People would have stoned him out of the Country if he had come thither.

Hereupon the Parishioners of *Croydon*, once again most humbly Petitioned his Majesty in Council, and annexed their Proposals aforesaid, shewing how inevitably they must be ruined if he were continued, and prayed his Removal.

Whereupon the 28 of May 1673, It was ordered as followeth.

At the Court at Whitehall 28 of May 1673.

Present

The Kings most Excellent Majesty.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York.

Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*.

Lord Chancellor.

Lord Treasurer.

Lord Privy Seal.

Duke of *Lauderdale*.

Earle of *Ogle*.

Earle of *Bridgewater*.

Earle of *Bath*.

Earle of *Carlisle*.

Earle of *Arlington*.

Earle of *Craven*.

Earle of *Carbury*.

Viscount of *Hallifax*.

Lord *Magnard*.

Lord *Newport*.

Lord *Holles*.

Mr. Vice-Chamberlain.

Mr. Secretary *Coventry*.

Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Chancellor of the Dutchy.

Mr. of the Ordnance.

Sr. *Thomas Osburn*.

Mr. Speaker.

VHereas, upon hearing the Complaints of the Inhabitants of the Parish of *Croydon* in the County of *Surrey*, against Dr. *Glover* Vicar of that Place, concerning several exorbitant courses by him practised for recovery of his Tithes: it was the 4 of April last referred to his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*, and the Lord High-Chancellor of England, to endeavour to settle the Business for the future quiet of the Parishioners, and that there may be a constant Maintenance for the Vicar there. And the said Inhabitants by their Humble Petition this day read at the Board, Praying his Majesty to receive a Report from

from the Lords References of their Proceedings therein, and to suspend the said Doctor, and give the Petitioners leave to proceed at Law against him, or otherwise to relieve them; it was thereupon Ordered by his Majesty in Council, that it be again referred to his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, and the Right Honourable the Lord High Chancellor of England, who calling all Parties before them, are to endeavour to compose and settle the said Business according to the Proposals made by the said Inhabitants of Croydon: but if they cannot effect the same, then it is Ordered that the said matter in difference be heard at this Board on Wednesday the 1st of June next, at which time all Parties concerned are to give their attendance.

Edward Walker.

Before the time for this Hearing came, unluckily it fell out that Dr. Clewer having taken a little too much of the Creature in London, being upon his Journey home, just as God would please to have it (to shew what he deserved) against the Gallows near Newington-Butts, his Horse threw him, or he fell off from his Horse, broke his Leg in three pieces, and put his Shoulder out: there he lay and none would help him, the people therabouts knowing him so well that one cried, *There lies the Vicar of Croydon with his Leg broke, I would to God he had broken his neck: the Church would then be no more scandalized by such a Rogue, nor the poor People tormented.* Others wished more severe things, which favoured not of Christianity, therefore we will not mention them; but certain it is no one would help to remove him till they were paid beforehand, because he is counted so great a Knave that none would trust him; nor would a Coach-man take him up to carry him to Dr. Welden's house (the Parson of Newington) before he had ten shillings in hand, which is not half a Mile: And when he was at Doctor Welden's house, he sent for one Doctor Thorland the Robe-fetter from London, who found him in a very ill condition, but very glad he saw him at all: for it happened about twenty years since an accident of the same nature befel him in Northamptonshire, of which the said Doctor Thorland cured him, but to this day was never paid for it: Nevertheless the good man, as became a Christian, pitied the Doctor, and seeing his misery, applied himself to his Cure, and effected the same in about three months, when he demanded for his pains in this and the former Cure fifty pounds: but the Doctor would not pay him, upon which he arrested him: thereupon he pleaded himself his Majesties Chaplain, shewed a Certificate of his being sworn in that capacity, and so got off without paying for his Cure. And as unworthily he served Doctor Welden, in whose house he so long lay sick, to the great trouble and disorder of his Family, prejudice and spoiling of his Goods.

By this means the Cause could not come to a Hearing, as by the Order of 28th May 1673, was directed.

But during this the Doctors sickness, he was several times sent unto by his Grace of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor, to know if he would resigne; he declared that he would so soon as there were indifferent Persons nominated to Arbitrate the Difference between him and his Parishioners concerning arrears of Tithes.

Thereupon his Parishioners presented the Petition annexed, and had the Order of Reference under-written made thereupon.

To his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, and the Right Honourable the Lord high Chancellor of England.

The Humble Petition of the Inhabitants of Croydon.

Humbly Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioners most thankfully acknowledge your Lordships great Favour in giving them hopes of the removal of Doctor Clewer their Vicar, and placing amongst them Mr. H. Scott who hath been two Sundayes with them and Preached, and the whole

Parish in general satisfied with him, and are ready to make good their former Proposals under their hands for making a settled maintenance of one hundred and sixty pounds per ann. so he secured and paid in such manner as therein was proposed. Sunday the 22 day of June instant the Church Doores were shut up, there being no Person to Preach or read Prayers, which was a great discouragement to the Parish. That Doctor Clewer, who (as your Petitioners are informed) had resigned his Vicarage (or promised on Friday last was seven night so to have done) doth now refuse to make such surrender, until by your Lordships, two Gentlemen be nominated and appointed to arbitrate the matter in difference between him and some of the Parishioners concerning his Tithes in arrears, to which your Petitioners readily consent.

That by the Order of his Majesty and Council, upon the last Petition presented by your Petitioners, it was referred to your Lordships to end this business if you could, or otherwise the Cause upon the said Petition to have been heard at that Board the 11th of June last past: That your Petitioners have none to Preach to them, or Christen, Marry, or Bury; Mr. Helcott being gone into the Country.

The Premises considered, they most humbly implore your Lordships Favour to nominate and appoint under your Hands two Persons to arbitrate the difference aforesaid, and desire them to meet and end the same, and that Doctor Clewer may give his final determination whether he will surrender or not; and the Cause thereupon to be set down to be heard in Council; and in the mean time that you will be pleased to appoint some good man to Preach amongst them.

And as in Duty bound they shall Pray.

July 24 1673.

WE do nominate and appoint Sir Adam Brown Baronet, and Sir William Haward, to be the Persons to Arbitrate the matter in difference about Tithes in Arrears between Dr. Clewer, and the Inhabitants of Croydon, and do desire that they will undertake the trouble of ending these differences between them.

Gilb. Cant.

Shaftsbury C.

Whereupon Sir Adam Brown, and Sir William Haward appointed to meet at Croydon the 5th of August 1673. where they met that day, and on the 6, 7, and 18th of August and on the 2d and 9th of September, to hear and compose the matters in difference between the said Vicar and his Parishioners.

And they heard, and determined about two hundred and fifty differences, and made their Report in express words as followeth.

To his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, and the Right Honorable the Lord High Chancellor of England.

May it please your Lordships,

In pursuance of your Lordships Reference unto us made, upon the Petition of the Inhabitants of the Town of Croydon, in the County of Surry, dated the 24th of June last, we have been several dayes upon the Place (to wit) on the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 25th of August last, and the 2d and 9th of September instant, to endeavour to compose the matter in difference betwixt Dr. William Clewer, and those of his Parish with whom he had any controversy. On the 5th of August, the Doctor after some delay came to us to the George-Inn, where many of the Parishioners being present we examined as many of their Cases as we could before ten of the Clock at Night, when the Doctor would stay no longer, though a hundred of People were waiting, so we adjourned to eight a Clock the next morning; when the Doctor refused to come to us, alledging indisposition of Body. Whereupon resolving to proceed as far as we could, we went to his house, and continued sitting from eight in the morning till half an hour past twelve at night, without any intermission to eat, in which time we were sometimes told by the Doctor that we needed not to trouble our selves any farther for that he and those that were then in Arrears to him (and which we had

had not before determined should agree. But upon the importunity of the Poor we stayed and heard all Persons that the Doctor then complained against, and determined every Case then before us, so that we thought to have made our Report. But afterwards accidentally riding through the Town, and hearing fresh Complaints upon the desire of many of the Inhabitants, we appointed to meet again on the 25th of August last; when accordingly we came to the Town, and sent for the Doctor, who refused to come to us. Whereupon we again went down to his House; but were so delayed by him, that we could not in the forenoon dispatch above eight or nine Persons. He refusing to let those be called that were present, and ready to pay money, and calling upon others that were not there, and who only owed him for Christenings and Offerings. And having sat till one of the Clock, we went to the George to dinner, desiring the Doctors company with us; offered him the convenience of a Coach because of his Lameness, and left the same to bring him, went our selves on foot, the which we rather did because his own Horse was inconvenient, and we were much incommoded thereby the smallness of his Room, and the heat occasioned by the crowd of People; but the Doctor would not come to us. So that after sending for him several times, and he refusing to come, we writ to him, and appointed him to meet us on the 2d of September instant. Expressly desiring him to prepare us a List of the Persons names that owed him any money, and how much each owed him, and and for what; that so we might lose no more time in searching his Books and Papers, for all the men that came before us, which much hindered our proceedings; which done we dismiss those that attended, who lost that dayes work, and appointed them to attend on the said second of September. But on the first of September the said Doctor prevailed (upon pretence that he was ill by Preaching the Sunday before) to defer the meeting till the 9th of September, when he promised to come to the George to us, and that in the mean time the Parishioners should have notice thereof. Nevertheless we loth to disappoint them, come to Croydon the said 2d of September, and found many of the Inhabitants waiting, having had no timely notice, and therefore sent to the Doctor, desired him to come to us and dispatch them (being informed he was well and went abroad that day:) but though we sent often down, he refused to come, and so we were forc't to dismiss them with the loss of that day also, which much troubled us; appointing them to appear again the 9th of September, when we again attended, and sent for the Doctor, who at first refused to come; pretending he had not promised so to do, whereby he spent great part of our time, in so much that we could do nothing till after dinner; when we sat, and the Inhabitants being present. We demanded the List aforesaid, but could not prevail for the same; so that most part of our time (as formerly) was spent in his turning over his Books. Nevertheless we sat till ten at night, and dispatch't all that were present, unless some few which the Doctor would not stay to end, though he continued longer in the house then we believe would have dispatch'd them; nor would he agree, though we desired it, to appear the next morning to end the same, so that they lost their labour. And we do humbly certifie that having examined about two hundred and fifty several Cases, we did find that the occasion of the differences between the Doctor and them was the unreasonable demands of Tithes, and other undue impositions he had endeavoured to impose upon most of them, being the poorer sort of the Inhabitants, who being illiterate, were by undue means drawn either into exorbitant Agreements, penal Bills, or Judgments, by Arresting and keeping them in durance, till they complied with him therein; whereby many Families were put to very great expence, and thereby much impoverished some of them, totally ruined others, forced them to run from their Houses, and leave their Wives and Children to the Parish; by which means we conceive that he himself in some measure hath been the occasion of the non-payment of what was his just dues, which otherwise might probably have been had with the Affections of the People. And for ground of this our belief, we take leave further to inform your good Lordships, That every person that appeared before us, and with whom the Doctor had any contest, most willingly submitted to whatever we should determine between them; whereupon we proceeded to examine his Demands, and upon deliberate Consideration of what was alledged on each side, found them very extravagant, and not fitting to be submitted unto; therefore moderated the same, giving him in some cases but the twentieth, in others the twelfth, tenth, sixth or fourth part of what was demanded, which in many cases was more than they ought to have

paid; Nevertheless they most readily submitted thereunto, and all of them paid the same in hopes of the Doctor's being removed, so that they may not further be troubled with him; the which he seemed to insinuate his readines unto, and was the great Motive that in many cases invited us to do what we did, excepting some poor Almsmen, from whom he had gotten Judgments for several sums of money; who being unable to pay the same, the Parish rather than they should go to Goal, offered to pay a Part thereof: Whereupon finding little or no ground for the said Judgments, we reduced the sums demanded to a third part; and the Parish undertook to satisfie the same, with which the Doctor rested satisfied; and also two or three small sums not exceeding five pounds in the whole, for payment whereof we have given some short time. And we did determine all the Cases that came before us, except one of Christopher Joyner deceased, of whose Executors he demanded ten pounds per annum for ten years arrears of Tithes, when-as he had not above twenty pounds per annum in the Parish; and Sir Parbeck Temple and Thomas Bowers Cases, the difference between whom had been before submitted to References and Awards made therein; Nevertheless they submitted to our determination. And Sir Parbeck Temple tendered the money according to his Award, which would not be accepted; And excepting also the Case of Edmund Hurry the which had also been submitted unto Reference, and one Award made therein (though he be not able to pay any part of the money) which Cases we were forced to leave as we found, the Doctor refusing to refer himself to us therein. And having thus proceeded (being weary) with these delays, we left the said Parishioners, who most humbly and unanimously implore your good Lordships Favour to remove from amongst them the said Doctor, and that a good man may be placed amongst them; In which Suit we also humbly joyn to your Honours, as a thing which for the reasons aforesaid, we do judge very convenient. All which nevertheless we humbly submit to your Lordships Judgments, and remain,

My Lords,
Croydon, Septemb. 10. 1673. Your Lordships most humble Servants,
Adam Brown
William Howard

This Report is not the tenth part so bad as the matter appeared against the Doctors the particular Cases decided are too long to insert; but if they were, it would not be possible for any man to believe there could be so many horrid Oppressions and Frauds put upon poor People by any Clergy-man living.

Of this Report there were two Copies signed; the one of them the Referrees presented to my Lords Grace of Canterbury, the other to the late Lord Chancellor, who thereupon promised to do what in them lay to remove the said Doctor: accordingly he was sent for, promised his Grace that he would resigne; and came to the Lord Chancellor and told him the same also, And that when-ever his Lordship should desire the same, he would do it; adding, that his Grace commanded him to tell his Lordship that he would present to Croydon such a Person as his Lordship would appoint. And upon this Consideration the Lord Chancellor promised the said Clewer to provide for him some other Living, bidding him rely upon his Honour for it, assuring him he should have the first convenient Living that fell in his gift, or to that effect: Whereupon the said Doctor promised to conform to his Lordships desires, but neglected to do the same, shuffling and endeavouring to put tricks upon their Lordships. This necessitated the Parishioners to petition his Majesty and Council once more, therein setting forth what the Referrees had done, annexing their Report to the said Petition, shewing the Necessity of the Doctor's being removed, or the Towns being ruined: Therefore humbly implored his Removal, or that they might have his Majesties Royal leave for to insert a Clause into the Act of Parliament then drawing, to settle the 160 l. per Annum on the Vicar; to make the said Doctor incapable of any preferment in Church or State.

This Petition being read, the Kings most Excellent Majesty Present, the Parishioners were called in, and told by the Lord Chancellor that their Petition had been read, and that his Majesties Royal pleasure was, that in Case the said Doctor did not surrender before the Bills designed to be brought into Parliament for settling the maintenance aforesaid should be presented to the Parliament, that then they should put

in such a Clause into the said Bill, wishing the Parish to hasten the said Bill. This the Lord Chancellor declared to them in his Majesties Presence. Besides this, the Order following was made.

At the Court at *Whitehal* Octob. 15. 1673.

Present.

The Kings most excellent Majesty in Council,

UPon reading the Petition of the Inhabitants of *Croydon*, complaining against Dr. *William Clewer* their Vicar, and praying that he may be removed for several Reasons at large set forth in the Petition; His Majesty in Council hath this day declared, That when the Inhabitants of the said Parish of *Croydon* shal provide to settle a hundred & sixty pounds by the year, as a maintenance for the Vicar of the said Parish, according to their Proposal in the said Petition, in order to the passing of an Act to confirm the same for ever on the Vicarage of the said Parish, then his Majesty will give effectual Order for removing of the present Incumbent Doctor *Clewer*.

Robert Southwel.

Upon this the Parishioners immediately went home, and Published in the Market and at the Church his Majesties Gracious Answer, desiring all the Inhabitants to meet at the Vestry to sign a Declaration testifying their Consents to the Passing of the Bill aforesaid; and accordingly most of them did meet, Signed and Sealed such Certificate of their Consents, and their humble Petition to both Houses of Parliament to Pass the said Bill, and empowering a Solicitor to prosecute the Passing thereof.

This done, a Bill was drawn, and such a Clause as a foresaid was contained therein; when drawn, the same was copied, and one Copy carried, and left with his Grace of *Canterbury*, the other with the then Lord Chancellor: They having perused the same, My Lord of *Canterbury* referred the Amendment thereof to Mr. *Phillips* of the Inner-Temple, his Graces Counsel; and the Lord Chancellor, to Mr. Attorney *Montague*: both were attended, and they made their several Amendments, with which the same was fairly copied, and put into Sir *Adam Brown's* hand to present in *October* last: But the Prorogation of Parliament prevented the same.

All this time the said Doctor had notice of it, knew of the Clause, Promised to surrender so it might be left out; went to both his Grace of *Canterbury*, and from him to the Lord Chancellor, frequently declaring the same: And my Lord Chancellor offered him an other Living, which he kept void for him, (and so in truth it was till the very day his Majesty was pleased to send for the Seal from his Lordship) But the Doctor resolving to persist in his Villanies to ruine the Parish of *Croydon* (as he frequently declares he will do before he leaves it) refused to surrender, but continues to go on in his horrid oppressions and vexations, commencing suits against his Parishioners without colour of Cause, to their unspeakable damage.

Under these sad Oppressions the poor Parish having lain these thirteen years languishing, they now become humble Supplicants to the Parliament of *England*, To Enable them by an Act to give such Maintenance to a succeeding Minister, as may be an Encouragement to a Sober, Learned, Orthodox and Peaceable Man to come and settle amongst them.

To do the Church that Right as to remove so wicked and scandalous a Person out of it, and for the Honour and Vindication of the Religion of the Church of *England*, to make him for ever incapable of serving in the Church again, than which no greater advantage can be done to the Church of *England* at this time.

For the said Doctor is a frequenter of houses of debauchery, particularly, a blind beggarly disorderly Alehouse in a by-place within the Parish of *Newington*, notori-

